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FINANCE

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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

August 27, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Mikulski:

Last year, I worked with you to ensure that the decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) efforts at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (Portsmouth) in Piketon, Ohio, would continue without interruption or layoffs to the facility's workforce. This was made possible because, along with my colleagues in the Ohio delegation, I requested, and you supported, a budget anomaly from the Office of Management and Budget. This anomaly allowed the Department of Energy (DOE) to continue D&D funding above the level appropriated in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 appropriations.

This year, I wrote to the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee requesting that Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Feinstein provide the \$275 million necessary to support the current pace of operations at Portsmouth. Unfortunately, due to sequestration's arbitrary spending caps, the subcommittee funded the project at the President's requested level for FY 2016 (\$165 million). The House Appropriators provided a higher level (\$213 million) than the Senate but, unfortunately, those funds will not continue clean up at the current level. Because of the failure to provide adequate funding for Portsmouth, WARN notices have been issued to hundreds of Portsmouth employees, increasing the urgent need to come together and address this funding shortfall.

As the fiscal year ends, it does not appear that Congress will pass the fiscal year 2016 Energy and Water appropriations bill by the end of September. The result will likely be that Congress passes a short-term continuing resolution (CR). Passage of a short-term CR means that the DOE will apportion funds at the lower Senate-funded level.

Because of the funding challenges, I ask that you again take action to continue the current level of funding for D&D efforts at Portsmouth. I also ask you appropriate funds to continue the current pace of operations at Portsmouth for the entire 2016 fiscal year. This can be done directly by appropriating the necessary funds (\$275 million) or through another year-long anomaly.

Portsmouth's D&D efforts are an integral part of the Department of Energy's commitment to the people of southern Ohio. Continued operations at the present level is an essential part of that commitment. I look forward to working with you to preserve the jobs at this facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrod Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sherrod Brown  
U.S. Senator

cc: Senator Lamar Alexander  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
The Honorable Shaun Donovan  
Director, White House Office of Management and Budget  
The Honorable Ernest Moniz  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy